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LECTURE
ON
FREEDOM OF MIND,

BY THE
REVEREND HENRY WILKES, A.M.,

AND
SPEECH

OF HIS EXCELLENCY THE RIGHT HON. THE
EARL OF ELGIN & KINCARDINE, K.T., &c.,
DELIVERED BEFORE THE
MERCANTILE LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

OF
MONTREAL,

AT THE OPENING OF THE WINTER'S COURSE OF LECTURES
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Montreal

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PREFACE.

On the occasion of the opening of the Winter's Course of Lectures of the Mercantile Library Association, the Introductory Lecture was delivered by the Rev. Henry Wilkes, A.M., in the Assembly Room of Donegana's Hotel, to an audience of from seven to eight hundred persons. At the upper end of the room, a platform was erected, which was graced by His Excellency the Governor-General, Lady Alice Lambton, Hon. Colonel Bruce, Lord Mark Kerr, Major Campbell, John Young, Esq., H. E. Montgomerie, Esq., and several other gentlemen, including the Directors of the Association. The Reverend Lecturer was supported by the President and Vice-President of the Institution. At the close of the Lecture, His Excellency rose, and, in a clear, distinct, and impressive manner, delivered a most eloquent Address.

The Board of Directors of the Mercantile Library Association, actuated by a desire to perpetuate and increase the interest created by the delivery of this Lecture and Address, have decided on publishing them in their present form. They are confident that every one who had the pleasure of listening to these prelections, will desire to possess them in a form convenient for reference; and they believe that those who had not that privilege, will gladly avail themselves of the opportunity of perusing them.

Of the Lecture itself, little needs to be said. The subject is a comprehensive and a difficult one; but all will allow that it has been most ably treated.

The Directors trust that the Reverend Lecturer will pardon them if they take this opportunity of expressing their sense, not only of the lucid and masterly manner in which his subject was handled, but also of the exceeding delicacy and propriety of the reference to the presence of His Excellency, and the happy results which might be expected from the patronage of so distinguished a personage.

His Excellency's Address contains much that is really instructive. The reader cannot fail to admire the elegance of diction, the soundness and poetic beauty of the ideas, and the fervid eloquence which characterize it.

Montreal, November, 1848.



LECTURE.

GENTLEMEN,—An English classical poet hails the approach of the season upon which we are entering, and of which your usual series of public exercises gives us due notice, in an apostrophe as truthful as it is beautiful:

“O Winter, ruler of the inverted year,
Thy scattered hair with sleet like ashes fill’d,
Thy breath congeal’d upon thy lips, thy cheeks
Fring’d with a beard made white with other snows
Than those of age, thy forehead wrapp’d in clouds,
A leafless branch thy sceptre, and thy throne
A sliding car, indebted to no wheels,
But urg’d by storms along its slippery way,—
I love thee, all unlovely as thou seemest,
And dreaded as thou art.”

Is not the benevolence large that can love anything like this? Does not this friend of darkness restrict the journey of the great orb of day, and plunge us diurnally into gloom before our work is half done? The writer replies in vindication:

“————— but kindly still
Compensating his loss with added hours
Of social converse and instructive ease,
And gathering, at short notice, in one group
The family dispers’d, and fixing thought,
Not less dispersed by daylight and its cares.”

For seven winters has the Mercantile Library Association done its utmost to realize in some good measure the conception of our poet. You have sought to improve these “added hours of social converse,” by gathering, from time to time, into “one group” the more general family, in order to “fix the thought, dispersed by daylight and its cares.” Having addressed you once or twice annually since your organization as a Society, it has been my privilege to

mark your steady progress in all that should characterize a literary institution, and to observe that, in conjunction with your Sister Society, the Mechanics' Institute, you have achieved the creation, in this community, of a taste for exercises such as the present. The time was, when it would have been impracticable to attract an audience of any extent, to listen to such prelections, upon philosophical and scientific subjects, as those which for several years you have provided. Whatever the Theatre might have done, the Lecture-Room could not have drawn a multitude. Unless I mistake, however, the case is now so strikingly otherwise, that you have had to provide once and again a larger space, which has been speedily filled. This result is matter of gratulation in every point of view. It induces the healthful exercise of the intellect, and offers such inducement for its culture as greatly detracts from the otherwise potent influences that draw into evil. It is fitted to make better merchants, better citizens, and better men. It is not for me to repeat now sentiments uttered five years since, on the occasion of your opening new rooms; but subsequent observation and reflection have only served to confirm the estimate then formed of the advantages of well-conducted Mercantile Library Associations. Assuredly you deserve well of the community.

Therefore, if his Lordship will pardon the allusion, do we rejoice in the distinguished patronage and presence by which your first gathering for the present season is graced. It is truly an epoch in your history, — a point from which we hope you will start into greater success. The Representative of our beloved Queen doubtless regards with complacency your persevering efforts to promote self-improvement, and the well-being of the community; and the more so because they are the exertions of a succession of young men, the future merchants of Canada. Delicacy forbids more than the expression of delight that a nobleman of such high character and attainments, and in a position so exalted, should in this truly simple and kind manner cast the weight of his influence into this good cause. You cannot fail to be greatly encouraged in your laudable efforts, by this token of his Excellency's regard. Nor will the example be without its effect upon that community to

which you look for a measure of support. Hard as times are, your claims will not be disregarded.

Let me pass from these introductory observations, to the topic on which it is my purpose to address you this evening; merely premising further, that it is matter of regret that this position is not occupied by an abler individual, on an occasion so propitious as the present.

FREEDOM OF MIND !

One of Johnson's definitions of "freedom" is "Liberty, exemption from servitude, independence." This will suit our present purpose. By "freedom of mind" is meant its "liberty" to think, to range abroad, to investigate, to reason independently of all extraneous control. Except to its Maker it is exempt from servitude; and even He requires the service of powers which He has made to be free. Without freedom there could be no responsibility; yet Jehovah reigns, and his intelligent offspring are accountable. The mind is responsible *only* to its Maker and Supreme Ruler, it acknowledges no allegiance to merely fellow mind—to man it is not accountable. Responsibility of *action* extends into a wider sphere. We may be rightfully accountable to properly instituted human authority for our *doings*, but not for our *thinking*, that is independent. Our fellows cannot control it. The mind is beyond their reach,—nor have they the slightest right to interfere with its movements, except in the way of instruction and persuasion, which must necessarily recognise our personal freedom. This inherent liberty unfolds itself in our earliest mental efforts. The child thinks without restraint. He runs hither and thither in search of pleasurable sensations, the sources of which, *for him*, abound in every department of nature. He rapidly perceives, and comparing his perceptions with one another, forms and treasures up ideas, which, although imperfect, are nevertheless there, for future correction and enlargement. In possession of a little stock constantly enlarging, the young mind, careers and gambols along with the joyousness of a perfect freedom. Many an imaginary paradise does he construct, with sunny skies and wandering rills, with verdant slopes and rocky eminences, with grass and flowers, trees and fruits,

sometimes half fancying them real, and at other times placing them among the **expectations** of the future. Active planning and scheming succeeds, and then follow the disappointments of a more sober reality. Experience at length instructs him that castle-building in the air lacks the essential **feature** of stability, an actual foundation! But amid all this wildness or sobriety of thinking, the consciousness of coercion never for a moment intrudes itself. What son or daughter of man holds the check rein by which this thinking could be restrained? Whose voice other than that of the Almighty, may pronounce the fiat "hitherto shalt thou proceed, but no further?" It is true that by judicious education you may direct these currents of thought into channels wherein profit and reputation may be obtained, but education consists not in force applied to the mind; it rather *leads* than *drives*;—controlling what remains perfectly free, by the persuasive influence of motive. Should the educator deem punishment requisite, in order to induce diligence in a prescribed course, yet this agency cannot affect the freedom of the mind; it can only suggest a motive whereby it may be induced to exercise its liberty in one department rather than in another. The same is true of the full aged man. Tyranny may chain his body, and oppress his interests, and lacerate his feelings, but it cannot lay its iron grasp upon his soul,—she laughs the despot to scorn, and moves as she pleases. Persecution of opinion may force men into hypocrisy; under its goading they may be tempted to *pretend* to think under authority, but it is only pretence, for thought is not to be thus coerced. Amid the gloom of the latter part of the middle ages, Copernicus with conscious mental freedom examined the several theories of the universe, which had been propounded by ancient astronomers, and astonished at the complication of their systems, as well as at their discordance and want of symmetry, he set himself to frame out of them one that could be established. He was an Eclectic in respect of the then state of science, and by independent thought and research, taking out of each system whatever was true, and rejecting whatever was false and complicated, he at length composed that admirable whole, which is now called after him, the "*Copernican System*," and which is, in reality, the true arrangement

of the planetary economy, such as it has been established by evidence that can never be shaken. Had he shrunk from the exercise of his liberty of thought in deference to the schoolmen and ecclesiastics of his age, others would have subsequently discovered the truth, but his name would have had no place on the records of fame. This inherent freedom of mind asserted itself in most unpropitious circumstances in the case of Galileo. That polished, comprehensive, large-minded, original Italian, lived in an age of mental oppression; it being held as a crime to think in anywise differently from the ruling powers. But who of them could chain that soul of eagle-wing? "Galileo," says Professor Playfair, "is, in truth, one of those to whom human knowledge is under the greatest obligations. His discoveries in the theory of motion, in the laws of the descent of heavy bodies, and in the motion of projectiles, laid the foundation of all the improvements which have since been made by the application of mathematics to natural philosophy. If to this we add the invention of the telescope, the discoveries made by that instrument, the confirmations of the Copernican System which these discoveries afforded, and lastly, the wit and argument with which he combated, and exposed the prejudice and presumption of the Schools, we must admit that the history of human knowledge contains few greater names than that of Galileo." But in combating that "prejudice and presumption" to which Professor Playfair alludes, Galileo came into conflict with those who sought to curb the freedom of thought, and for ever to stereotype the human mind. Copernicus was dying as the sheets of *his* work were presented to him, so that he could not be brought to trial for heresy. Galileo employed the press again and again in putting forth his researches and discoveries, only however to draw down upon him the indignation of the Holy office. The sentence of the Inquisition after the imprisonment and examination of the philosopher was that he must recant "for 1st, (I quote from the sentence pronounced) The proposition that the sun is in the centre of the world (meaning the planetary system) and immoveable from its place, is absurd, philosophically false, and formally heretical, because it is expressly contrary to Holy Scripture. 2nd, The proposition that the Earth is not the cen-

tre of the World, nor immoveable, but that it moves, and also with a diurnal motion, is also absurd, philosophically false, and, theologically considered, at least erroneous in faith." He was condemned to suffer imprisonment for an indefinite period ; and, as a salutary punishment, he was ordained to recite once a week, for three years, seven penitential psalms. This latter part we shall hope was not a heavy burthen, though we had rather do it voluntarily than by force. The aged philosopher having heard his sentence, was made to pronounce the abjuration dictated to him, "I abjure, curse, and detest the error and heresy of the motion of the Earth, &c., &c." Had they, then, enchained his soul ? Had Galileo lost his freedom of mind ? On the contrary, it is said, that after pronouncing the abjuration, and rising from his kneeling posture, amid the confusion of the moment, he indignantly stamped his foot and said, in an under tone, "*It moves notwithstanding.*" How incompetent the Inquisition or any other Tribunal to fetter the human soul ! They compelled him to *utter* a falsehood, but they could not compel him to *think* one ; his mind they were unable to coerce.*

* This statement concerning Galileo has been honoured by a column and a half of strictures in the "Melanges Religieux" of the 21st instant, the purport of which is to deny the usual averment that the philosopher was brought before the Inquisition and subjected to punishment for his astronomical theories, and to maintain that bad theology was the offence for which he was tried. In other words, having been warned not to attempt to reconcile Scripture with the Copernican system, he persisted contumaciously in such attempts, and was for them brought up, gently dealt with, yet imprisoned and forced to recant. It is acknowledged that there was used an apparent rigour for form's sake, and for the sake of example. In reply to this article with its citation of authorities, I have to state:—1. That when the Lecture was written I was perfectly aware of the attempts which had been made by Bergier and others to vindicate the Court of Rome from the charge of prosecuting Galileo on account of his astronomical theories as being contrary to received opinions, and to Holy Scripture. The whole matter is briefly, but satisfactorily discussed in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, art. *Galileo*. 2. That if for the sake of argument we were to admit the hypothesis of the "Melanges Religieux" and its cited authorities, the case would still illustrate the position taken in the Lecture, and come legitimately under the unsparing condemnation it contains of all persecution for opinions. To have punished Galileo for his interpretation of Scripture, or for attempts to reconcile its narrative with his astronomical theories, would have been an outrage upon his essential freedom of mind, and a wrong done to his inherent right to think for himself. This is not the place to enter into controversy with the Church of Rome upon the existence of an earthly tribunal which men's consciences are bound to recognize in matters of religious faith, to which the article alluded to refers in its closing paragraph. It is enough to say that the doctrine of this Lecture distinctly refuses to recognize any

It may be asked at this point, "Is this freedom lawlessness?" Is there no control, no rule for mind? May it run riot and be rampant? Do we remove it from the region of Law and of Government? The reply is strongly negative. Such would not be freedom! Law, properly considered, is the defence and exposition of liberty. This is seen in a well ordered Government; for under such Government only is

such tribunal, and that its author, whether viewing the declarations of Holy Writ, or studying the principles of the Divine government, or considering the essential nature of the human mind, arrives at the conclusion that *no such tribunal can ever be lawfully established*. 3. That the hypothesis on this matter of the "*Melanges Religieux*" and its cited authorities is not established. The attempts, which have been sufficiently able and ingenious, have proved abortive. "So far was Galileo from persisting in an attempt to reconcile the Bible with Copernicus, that he regarded this as a matter altogether indifferent and indeed beside the real question. 'I am inclined to believe,' says he in his letter to the Grand Duchess of Tuscany, 'that the intention of the Sacred Scriptures is to give mankind the information necessary for their salvation, and which, surpassing all human knowledge, can by no other means be accredited than by the mouth of the Holy Spirit. But I do not hold it necessary to believe that the same God who has endowed us with senses, with speech, and with intellect, intended that we should neglect the use of these, and seek by other means for knowledge which they are sufficient to procure us; especially in a science like astronomy, of which so little notice is taken in the Scriptures, that none of the planets except the sun and moon, and once or twice only Venus, under the name of Lucifer, are so much as named there. This therefore being granted, I think that in the discussion of natural problems we ought not to begin at the authority of texts of Scripture, but at sensible experiments and necessary demonstrations; for from the Divine Word sacred Scripture and nature did both alike proceed; and I conceive that, concerning natural effects, that which either sensible experience sets before our eyes, or necessary demonstrations prove unto us, ought not upon any account to be called in question, much less condemned, upon the testimony of Scripture texts, which may under their words couch senses seemingly contrary thereto.'" This passage, which I quote from the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, seems sufficient to set at rest the point before us. The man that could write these sentiments, would not allow himself to be drawn into the course, on the ground of which our opponents say that he was condemned. In another passage in one of his letters, he intimates that when under examination before the Inquisition, and attacked with texts of Scripture, he did venture to give a different version of one or two of them; but this appears to have been by the way, and not in accordance with his usual practice. He persisted in basing his views on "sensible experiments and necessary demonstrations." But although sentences in letters may be detached from their connection and severed so as to bolster up either hypothesis, one would think that *the sentence of the Inquisition itself must decide the question*. A translation of that sentence is given at length in the work from which I quote, and I cannot imagine anything more explicit than its condemnation on the ground of false theory concerning the earth and the sun. It is perfectly decisive as to the fallacy of the allegation, that "Galileo was not persecuted as a good astronomer, but only as a bad theologian." As the sentence is an interesting document, and as the matter continues to excite discussion in the French journals, I place it as a note at the end of the Lecture.

personal and social freedom secured in its exercise. It is there where there are good laws righteously administered, and not amid anarchy and confusion that the scene so beautifully sketched by the Hebrew prophet can be realized, "they shall sit every man under his vine, and under his fig tree ; and none shall make them afraid." It has already been hinted that the soul is under the authority of the Supreme Ruler. In its creation he has established an order of action, which may be denominated "Law," in the same sense as we speak of the "laws of motion" or the "laws of nature." For example, the ideas treasured up in our minds recur to us in an order of resemblance, contrast or contiguity which are termed the laws of association or suggestion. Mind affords a sphere for the formation of *habits* quite as large and adapted as that which is physical. Accordingly, as we accustom ourselves to think on given subjects and in a given channel, will the tendency to do so, and the facility of doing so increase, until at length there is created the force of a second nature. Besides these regulations, however, the Almighty hath promulgated a *moral code* based on the eternal principles of righteousness and truth, in accordance with which the thinking of the mind is to be regulated. Although fellowmen cannot control our minds, *we* have the power of governing them. Happily are the proverbs expressed, "He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty ; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city." "He that hath no rule over his own spirit is like a city that is broken down and without walls." We may turn our attention to good subjects if we choose so to do, and may form mental habits which will eschew "vain thoughts." Our Creator reasonably demands this of us. Imparting endowments so splendid, He requires us to use them and to cultivate them for his glory and our own highest good. Hence he may reasonably require our faith in His own testimony. It is only fitting that man should believe whatever God reveals, and that *because He reveals it*. But such arrangements do not restrict the freedom of the mind. On the contrary, they are the sphere of its exercise securing its order and beauty of action. Individual freeness is due to the condition of man as a moral and responsible agent, but his freeness must be under law, or no fellow of his species could be free. If he

might triumph over all rule, and move uncontrolled by moral influences acting as he liked, no one else could have liberty. So, if a man's fellows, free as they are, were not reduced to obligation and placed under law, they would exercise a license incompatible with *his* freedom. Let it ever be understood among first principles that *the reign of law is not only perfectly compatible with freedom, but is in fact essential to its existence.*

Having asserted the inherent freedom of the mind, and the absurdity of all attempts by force to interfere with it, we may be asked, "Is it possible to enslave it? Can it be brought into bondage? Is it susceptible of enchainment? May its liberty be laid prostrate, and be lost? This inquiry must be answered in the affirmative, but it must be added that *SELF is the only agent by whom the evil can be wrought.* It may be enslaved, but self must forge and rivet its chains. Its liberty may be laid prostrate and be lost, but only a suicidal hand can deal that blow, or effect that grievous ruin. And by what instrumentality do men bring on themselves this catastrophe? In what manner do they reach at length this fearful issue? The reply is by *vice*. But in giving this answer the word is employed in a large and comprehensive sense, including mental viciousness as well as physical,—a want of rectitude in the soul, as also a yielding to the tyranny of a sensual course. How often is the intellect enslaved by prejudice and bigotry! The persecutors of Galileo put the fetters on their own souls which they could not rivet upon his. He *demonstrated* that the Earth moved round the Sun, and not the Sun round the Earth. Had their minds been actively free, the proofs which convinced him could not have failed to have persuaded them; but they yielded to the influence of bigotry and prejudice,—they put a veil upon their intellectual eye, and then they *could not see*. The minds of many are brought into bondage by the tyranny of *fashion*. They will not allow themselves to think except in accordance with the dictates of this fickle and often grotesque goddess. Trifling and foolish as she is, and withal not a whit more steady than the weathercock, she, nevertheless, holds the many in a depressing slavery. Now she throws around her bondmen and bondwomen the chains of *caste*, which have no regard to intellect, or

culture, or worth, in the separations they effect, but purely to ancestry or to possessions. The mental crouching, and fawning sycophancy perpetrated under the despotism of this idol, are sad proofs that men may rob their own minds of the dignity and blessing of freedom. Respect for rank and station is one and a good thing, but a mental serfdom is another and very bad thing. The soul cannot flourish under such an incubus. It is not needful to illustrate the many grievous ways in which *sensuality* degrades and enslaves the soul. It is painful to reflect how low men may sink who give themselves up "to those hurtful lusts which drown them in destruction and perdition." They descend into the most abject and least hopeful state of slavery. And yet, all the while they are responsible for that perverted state of the affections by which the healthful action of the mind is prevented.

In view of all these qualifying considerations, we are entitled to plead for the freedom of the mind. We may assert its claim to the highest liberty. And this is done for the purpose of earnestly insisting on *the practical recognition of those rights which this inherent freedom imparts*. Our design is less of a speculative than it is of a practical nature. There has always been a tendency to denounce men for an unpopular opinion. Let the free soul in its independent investigations come athwart the thinking of some old school,—let it propound new views, or new modifications of existing sentiments, or let it see what it deems a better way than that trodden by others, of reaching a common end,—and he will often find the consequences of his temerity the reverse of pleasant. It often happens that the loudest declaimers on the rights of man and on the value of freedom, are the least tolerant of opposing sentiments. The men who assume *par excellence* the title of "liberals," are often most wrathful with those whose free minds decline subscription to all their doctrines, and refuse to draw in *their* harness. Some of the Cantons of Switzerland present, at this moment, illustrations of this fact. The party in power, being in the schools of politics denominated "radical," refuse to tolerate any dissent from the National Church, and persecute, imprison, and banish pastors and people who venture to hold private meetings for

religious services. The contrary party have, perhaps, been the greatest as they have been the oldest sinners against this law of liberty, but it cannot be doubted that there is a tendency in all parties and in all men "to cast out" those who refuse to think and act with them. *Combined* opinion and sentiment may mount the throne of tyranny. *All* despotisms are not in *single* hands. The multitude may cripple individual freedom. Impatient of contradiction and annoyed at opposition, the earnest crowd sometimes forget personal rights, and put down the man who has the courage and honesty to be singular. He is made the butt of ridicule, the finger of scorn is pointed at him, or he is indignantly denounced. Flaws in his character are searched for or imagined, and his good name is destroyed. The scourge of unpopularity is laid heavily upon him, while he is literally gibbeted before the public eye for the simple crime of daring to think for himself and to avow his convictions. And all this is done in the sacred name of freedom, and professedly at her shrine!

Now we contend that this course is not only in itself an outrage and a wrong, but the event will shew that the sin is retributively visited on the community in which it has existence. For it cripples and prevents mental progress. If you repress the movements, and put down even the erratic course of individual mind, a grievous mischief is inflicted on your generation. There is original greatness in all master spirits, but it will be found that the age in its circumstances and claims ordinarily develops and brings into exercise their peculiar energy. *Then* the great mind avails himself of the occasion, and sways these circumstances for the achievement of some noble issue. No generation advances of itself. A tame monotony leaves the many what their fathers were. The army may be large, well appointed, and thoroughly drilled, but it will lie in the camp inert, until the genius and energy of the commander call it to action, and lead it on to victory. So it is in the history of truth and morals. Some restless soul denounces an unsound principle, or strikes out a vital truth; at first it startles and perhaps offends, but ultimately it impresses and moves an entire people. Now, all intolerance of individual sentiment, out of the usual line of theory and in opposition to that of the multitude, is so far

to prevent the rising up of such men. Many of the great and good who have stirring and noble thoughts, shrink from the storm of obliquy and abuse, which their avowal would create, where the opinion of the many is a tyrant, and these thoughts are as a consequence utterly lost to their generation.* Besides this loss, it will be found that in these circumstances, the spirit of enterprize is repressed, and the people, hugging themselves in their superlative wisdom, and enwrapping themselves in a seven-fold robe of bigotry and prejudice, sublimely descend into a state as contemptible as it is inane. Look at those parts of Europe and Asia in which mental slavery is a characteristic of the people. What avails a fine climate, a fertile soil, mineral wealth, noble rivers, good harbours, in short, all natural advantages,—they have not the *mind* to use them, they have neither self-reliance nor independence of character, their souls are enthralled in a dreary serfdom, and they merely vegetate, where they ought to grow into dignity and importance. Anything, therefore, which tends to repress individual and then combined enterprize, ought to be eschewed by a community.

The subject is of more than usual importance in the present day among ourselves, from the fact that we are in a transition state commercially, and our prosperity as a people depends chiefly, under the blessing of the Almighty, on the practical wisdom, the spirit of enterprize and industry, and the vigour of self-reliance found in the midst of us. The free-trade policy of the Mother Country, of which we have not the slightest reason to complain, has cut us off from that profitable monopoly which heretofore we have enjoyed. Changes are therefore forced upon us, and those minds deserve well of the community that freely exercise their right of thought upon our condition, and looking to the right hand and to the left, devise a course of action. That there will be a difference of opinion on these matters, is not only to be expected,

* The sentiments in this paragraph thus far, have already appeared through the press in an address delivered before the Theological Society of Dartmouth College in 1847. But, in addition to the consideration that a man is entitled to quote from himself, as that address was not published in Canada, I have not hesitated to insert them here. I may take this opportunity also of stating that the spirited lyrical effusion with which the lecture closes was given in the same address. That, however, is not my own, for alas! I am not a poet.

but is to be desired. It is seldom that all the truth on a given point lies with one mind ; others, sometimes opponents, supply the needful supplementary view ; so that both sides are required, in order to bring out and establish what is true and needful. Nor do the happiest suggestions always spring from persons in higher stations. Not unfrequently is there more original and vigorous thinking in the work-shop, than in the counting-house ; or at the desk of the merchant than in the hall of legislation. Let not that freedom of mind be repressed through the influence of an absurd pride of station. Give us healthy thoughts, no matter whence they come ! Hail the path of promising enterprize and effort, whoever shall mark it out ! Listen intelligently, and with befitting deference to wise counsels, by whomsoever uttered ! In our circumstances there is special need of individual thinking, and of vigorous acting. Cities have often been built up by the happy suggestion of an ardent spirit. Those manufactures or branches of trade have been introduced by individual enterprize, which have proved sources of wealth and influence from generation to generation. We earnestly deprecate, therefore, all attempts to put down men who think differently from current trains of thought, and who dare to be singular. We equally deprecate the contemptuous question, "*Who is HE ?*" before a suggestion can obtain a hearing. In discussions upon Navigation Laws and upon Free Trade, upon Protection and upon Tariff, upon the Feudal Tenure, and upon modes of taxation, let all PERSONALITY be eschewed ; let us hear nothing of the *station* or the *influence* of the man who says this or writes that, but let the simple question be, What is right ? What is truth ? What is the path which a sound, practical wisdom dictates ? We plead for an universal and most determined recognition of the freedom of mind, and of the right of freemen to express their thoughts. This will be for the honour of the community, and its prosperity too ; it will allow scope for its thoughtful spirits, and wide space for its ardent ones to do their best for themselves and for their fellows.

If it be inquired whether the control of law ought to regulate the freedom of expression, the reply is, of course, in the affirmative. Time does not now admit of much illustration of this point, but it may

be remarked, in general, that not only does the law of God regulate our language, condemning the evil and applauding the good, but there are other laws of which our fellows are the guardians and executive that rightfully regulate the exercise of this freedom. In this department also true liberty is defended and protected by law. Whether it be well to bring men before legal tribunals for sentiments which though generally injurious to Society have no personal reference, may admit of question and doubt ; some might think that *action* rather than *expression* were the true point from which punitive consequence should spring. But, however this may be settled, a healthy public sentiment rightfully denounces and puts down by its inherent moral force those expressions of thought which violate public decency, and would obscenely intrude themselves into the domain of virtue. There is an obvious moral limit to liberty, passing which it loses its character, and becomes licentiousness. If, therefore, men were to rise up among us, or come on a mission to us, propounding "*communist*" sentiments, for example, whereby the sacred bands of marriage are rudely dissevered, and the domestic hearth is profaned, and the rights of property are trampled upon ; we would not imprison them or coerce them, or invest them with the importance of martyrs to their miserable theories, but we would have a healthy public sentiment rise up in its dignity and calmly frown into banishment doctrines so pestiferous. When freedom of expression passes into licentiousness, and a man abuses his liberty in attacks upon the bulwarks of private and public virtue, it is only reasonable that "men shall clap their hands at him, and shall hiss him out of his place."^{*}

On this matter we may not enlarge. The sentiments which I have sought to place before you may be summed up in a few verses of exquisite sweetness and beauty :

" Free is the eagle's wing
Cleaving the sun's warm ray ;
Free is the mountain spring
As it rushes forth to-day.
But freer far the mind,—
Priceless its liberty ;
No hand must dare to bind,
GOD MADE IT TO BE FREE !

* Job xxvi. 23.

" You may chain the eagle's wing
 No more on clouds to soar :
 You may seal the mountain spring,
 That it leap to light no more.
 But the mind let none dare chain :
 Better it cease to be !
 Born, not to serve, but reign :
 GOD MADE IT TO BE FREE !

" Free is the mountain breeze,
 Floating from airy height ;
 Free are the rushing seas,
 And free, heaven's golden light.
 But freer than light or air,
 Or the ever rolling sea,
 Is the mind, beyond compare,
 GOD MADE IT TO BE FREE !

" Then guard the gem divine,
 Than gems or gold more rare ;
 Keep watch o'er the sacred shrine,
 No foe must enter there :
 Oh, let not error bind,
 Nor passion reign o'er thee !
 Keep the freedom of the mind,
 GOD MADE IT TO BE FREE."

SENTENCE OF THE INQUISITION UPON GALILEO !

" The sentence of the Inquisition upon Galileo," says the writer of an article in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, " one of the most remarkable records of intolerant ignorance and bigoted folly to be found in the history of science, is conceived in the following terms :"—

" We the undersigned, by the Grace of God, Cardinals of the Holy Roman Church, Inquisitors General throughout the whole Christian Republic, Special Deputies of the Holy Apostolical Chair against heretical depravity ; Whereas you, Galileo, son of the late Vincengo Galilei of Florence, aged seventy years, were denounced in 1615 to this Holy Office, for holding as true, a false doctrine taught by many, namely, that the sun is immoveable in the centre of the world, and that the earth moves, and also with a diurnal motion ; also, for having pupils whom you instructed in the same opinions ; also, for maintaining a correspondence on the same with some German Mathematicians ; also, for publishing certain letters on the solar spots, in which you developed the same doctrine as true ; also, for answering the objections which were continually produced from the Holy Scriptures, by glozing the said Scriptures according to your

own meaning; and whereas thereupon was produced the copy of a writing, in form of a letter, professedly written by you to a person formerly your pupil, in which, following the hypothesis of Copernicus, you include several propositions contrary to the true sense and authority of the Holy Scriptures: therefore this Holy Tribunal, being desirous of providing against the disorder and mischief which was thence proceeding and increasing, to the detriment of the holy faith, by the desire of his Holiness, and of the most eminent Lords Cardinals of this supreme and universal Inquisition, the two propositions of the stability of the sun, and motion of the earth, were *qualified* by the *theological qualifiers* as follows: 1st., *The proposition that the sun is in the centre of the world, and immoveable from its place, is absurd, philosophically false, and formally heretical, because it is expressly contrary to the Holy Scripture.* 2ndly., *The proposition that the earth is not the centre of the world, nor immoveable, but that it moves, and also with a diurnal motion, is also absurd, philosophically false, and theologically considered, at least, erroneous in faith.* But whereas being pleased at that time to deal mildly with you, it was decreed in the Holy Congregation, held before his Holiness on the 25th day of February, 1616, that his eminence the Lord Cardinal Bellarmine should enjoin you to give up altogether the said false doctrine; if you should refuse, that you should be ordered by the commissary of the Holy Office to relinquish it, not to teach it to others, nor to defend it, nor ever to mention it, and in default of acquiescence that you should be imprisoned; and in execution of this decree, on the following day, at the palace, in presence of his eminence the said Lord Cardinal Bellarmine, after you had been mildly admonished by the said Lord Cardinal, you were commanded by the Acting Commissary of the Holy Office, before a notary and witnesses, to relinquish altogether the said false opinion, and in future neither to defend nor teach it in any manner, neither verbally nor in writing; and upon your promising obedience you were dismissed. And in order that so pernicious a doctrine might be altogether rooted out, nor insinuate itself farther to the heavy detriment of the Catholic truth, a decree emanated from the Holy Congregation of the Index prohibiting the books which treat of this doctrine; and it was declared false, and altogether contrary to the Holy and Divine Scripture. And whereas a book has since appeared, published at Florence last year, the title of which showed you were the author, which title is, *'The Dialogue of Galileo Galilei on the two principal systems of the world, the Ptolemaic and Copernican;'* and whereas the Holy Congregation has heard, that, in consequence of the printing of the said book, the false opinion of the earth's motion and stability of the sun is daily gaining ground, the said book has been taken into careful consideration, and in it has been detected a glaring violation of the said order; which had been intimated to you, inasmuch as in this book you have defended the said opinion, already and in your presence condemned; although in said book you labor with many circumlocutions to induce the belief that it is left by you undecided, and as a mere terms probable; which is equally a very grave error, and an opinion can in no way be probable which has already been de-

clared and finally determined contrary to the Divine Scripture. Therefore, by our order you have been cited to this Holy Office, where, on your examination upon oath, you have acknowledged the said book as written or printed by you. You also confessed that you began to write the said book ten or twelve years ago, after the order aforesaid had been given. Also, that you demanded license to publish it, but without signifying to those who granted you this permission that you had been commanded not to hold, defend, or teach the said doctrine in any manner. You also confessed that the style of the said book was in many places so composed that the reader might think the arguments adduced on the false side, so worded as more effectually to entangle the understanding than to be easily solved, alleging in excuse that you have thus run into error, foreign (as you say) to your intention, from writing in the form of a dialogue, and in consequence of the natural complacency which every one feels with regard to his own subtilties, and in showing himself more skilful than the generality of mankind in contriving, even in favor of false propositions, ingenious and apparently probable arguments. And, upon a convenient time being given to you for making your defence, you produced a certificate in the handwriting of his eminence the Lord Cardinal Bellarmine, procured, as you said, by yourself, that you might defend yourself against the calumnies of your enemies, who reported that you had abjured your opinions, and had been punished by the Holy Office; in which certificate it is declared that you had not abjured your opinions, nor had been punished, but merely that the declaration made by his Holiness, and promulgated by the Holy Congregation of the Index, had been announced to you, which declares that the opinion of the motion of the earth, and stability of the sun, is contrary to the Holy Scriptures, and therefore cannot be held or defended. Wherefore, since no mention is there made of two articles of the order, to wit, the order 'not to teach' and 'in any manner,' you argued that we ought to believe that, in the lapse of fourteen or sixteen years they had escaped your memory, and that this was also the reason why you were silent as to the order, when you sought permission to publish your book, and that this is said by you not to excuse your error, but that it may be attributed to vain-glorious ambition rather than to malice. But this very certificate, produced on your behalf, has greatly aggravated your offence, since it is therein declared that the said opinion is contrary to the Holy Scriptures, and yet you have dared to treat of it, to defend it, and to argue that it is probable; nor is there any extenuation in the license artfully and cunningly extorted by you, since you did not intimate the command imposed upon you. But whereas it appeared to us that you had not disclosed the whole truth with regard to your intentions, we thought it necessary to proceed to the rigorous examination of you, in which (without any prejudice to what you confessed, and which is above detailed against you with regard to your said intention) you answered like a good Catholic. Therefore, having seen and maturely considered the merits of your cause, with your said confessions and excuses, and everything else which ought to be seen and considered, we have come to the

underwritten final sentence against you. Invoking, therefore, the most holy name of our Lord Jesus Christ, and of his most glorious Virgin Mother Mary, by this our final sentence, which, sitting in council and judgment for the tribunal of the Reverend Masters of Sacred Theology, and Doctors of both Laws, our assessors, we put forth in this writing touching the matters and controversies before us, between the magnificent Charles Sincerus, Doctor of both Laws, Fiscal Proctor of this Holy Office, of the one part, and you, Galileo Galilei, an examined and confessed criminal from this present writing now in progress as above of the other part, we pronounce, judge, and declare that you, the said Galileo, by reason of these things which have been detailed in the course of this writing, and which, as above, you have confessed, have rendered yourself vehemently suspected by this Holy Office of heresy; that is to say, that you believe and hold the false doctrine, and contrary to the Holy and Divine Scriptures, namely, that the sun is the centre of the world, and that it does not move from east to west, and that the earth does move, and is not the centre of the world; also that an opinion can be held and supported as possible after it has been declared and finally decreed contrary to the Holy Scripture, and consequently that you have incurred all the censures and penalties enjoined and promulgated in the Sacred Canons, and other general and particular Constitutions against delinquents of this description. From which it is our pleasure that you should be absolved, provided that, first, with a sincere heart and unfeigned faith, in our presence, you abjure, curse, and detest the said errors and heresies, and every other error and heresy contrary to the Catholic and Apostolic Church of Rome, in the form now shown to you. But, that your grievous and pernicious error and transgression may not go altogether unpunished, and that you may be made more cautious in future, and may be a warning to others to abstain from delinquencies of this sort, we decree that the book of the Dialogues of Galileo Galilei be prohibited by a public edict, and we condemn you to the formal prison of this Holy Office, for a period determinable at our pleasure; and, by way of salutary penance, we order you, during the next three years, to recite once a week the seven Penitential Psalms, reserving to ourselves the power of moderating, commuting, or taking off the whole or part of the said punishment and penance. And so we say, pronounce, and by our sentence declare, decree, and reserve, in this and in every other better form and manner, which lawfully we may and can use. So we the subscribing Cardinals pronounce.

“FELIX, Cardinal di Ascoli; GUIDO, Cardinal di Bentivoglis; DESIDERIO, Cardinal di Cremona; ANTONIO, Cardinal S. Onofrio; BERLINGERO, Cardinal Gressi; FRABRICIO, Cardinal Verospi; MARTINO, Cardinal Ginetti.”

SPEECH

DELIVERED BEFORE THE MEMBERS OF THE
MERCANTILE LIBRARY ASSOCIATION, MON-
TREAL, ON THE OPENING OF THE WINTER'S
COURSE OF LECTURES, 1848-49, BY HIS EX-
CELLENCY THE RIGHT HON. THE EARL OF
ELGIN AND KINCARDINE, K. T., GOVERNOR
GENERAL OF BRITISH NORTH AMERICA, &c.,
PATRON OF THE INSTITUTION.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,—I feel assured in advance that I shall be pardoned by you if I venture to speak in your name for a single moment, in order that I may tender our united and most hearty thanks to the Rev. Gentleman for the useful and instructive lecture that he has just delivered.—(Loud cheers.) We have heard from him much that well deserves to be remembered, conveyed to us in language so forcible and eloquent, that it is not likely soon to be forgotten.—(Cheers.) As I have risen for this purpose, I desire, with your permission, to take advantage of the opportunity to express the very deep interest that I feel in the welfare of this Institution, the Members of which have done me the favour to request that I would become its Patron.—(Loud cheers.) From what has fallen from the Rev. Gentleman, and from what I have heard from other sources, I gather that this Association was mainly founded by the exertions of some of the leading merchants of the City of Montreal, with a view of affording to the junior Members of the mercantile body opportunities of self-improvement and inducements sufficiently powerful to enable them to resist those temptations to idleness and dissipation which unhappily abound in all large communities.—(Hear, hear.) I understand, moreover, that those exertions have been by no means unavailing, but that year after year, large and increasing numbers of the class for whose benefit the Institution was especially designed, have shown their sense of its value by enrolling their names on the books of the Association as Members.—(Cheers.) These are most gratifying circumstances, creditable to all who have concurred in this good work; and, for myself, I can truly say that, whether as an individual sincerely desirous to promote the happiness and well-being of my fellow-men, or as the Representative

of our gracious Queen in this Province—(great cheering)—especially interested in whatever contributes to the welfare of the people of Canada, it gives me sincere gratification to associate my name with an undertaking so benevolent in its design and so promising in its first fruits. Having said thus much, in order that I might assure you of my very sincere sympathy in the objects of this Institution, I feel little disposed to detain you with many additional observations; for in presence of the facts to which I have adverted, which show with how sincere a desire for self-improvement you are animated, and with the knowledge that the advantages and pleasures of learning are set forth in the admirable lectures of which we have to-night heard a specimen, it is vain for me to attempt in a cursory address of this description to fan the fervour of your zeal or throw light on subjects which you are in the habit of hearing so effectively treated. Indeed, I should almost be tempted to affirm that in an age, when education is so generally diffused—when the art of printing has brought the sources of information so near to the lips of all who thirst for understanding—when so many of the secrets of nature have been revealed—when the impalpable and all-pervading electricity, and the infinite elasticity of steam have been made subservient to purposes of human utility,—the advantages of knowledge, in an utilitarian point of view—the utter hopelessness of a successful attempt on the part either of individuals or classes to maintain their position in society if they neglect the means of self-improvement—are truths too obvious to call for elucidation. I must say that it seems to me that there is less risk, therefore, of our declining to avail ourselves of our opportunities than there is of our misusing or abusing them; that there is less likelihood of our refusing to grasp the treasures spread out before us, than of our laying upon them rash and irreverent hands, and neglecting to cultivate those habits of patient investigation, humility, and moral self-control, without which we have no sufficient security, that even the possession of knowledge itself will be a blessing to us.—(Loud cheers.) I was much struck by a passage I met with the other day in reading the life of one of the greatest men of his age and country—WATT—(Cheers)—which seemed to me to illustrate very forcibly the nature of the danger to which I am now referring as well as its remedy. It is stated in the passage to which I allude, that Watt took great delight in reading over the specifications of inventions for which patent rights were obtained. He observed that of those inventions a large proportion turned out to be entirely worthless and a source of ruin and disappointment to their authors. And it is further stated that he discovered that, among these abortive inventions, many were but the embodiment of ideas which had suggested themselves to his own

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mind—which, probably, when they first presented themselves, he had welcomed as great discoveries, likely to contribute to his own fame and to the advantage of mankind, but which, after having subjected them to that rigid and unsparing criticism which he felt it his bounden duty to apply to the offspring of his own brain, he had found to be worthless and rejected. Now, unquestionably, the powerful intellect of Watt went for much in this matter: unquestionably his keen and practised glance enabled him to detect flaws and errors in many cases where an eye equally honest but less acute, would have failed to discover them; but can we doubt that a moral element was largely involved in the composition of that quality of mind which enabled Watt to shun the sunken rocks on which so many around him were making shipwreck—that it was his unselfish devotion to truth, his humility, and the practice of self-control, which enabled him to rebuke the suggestions of vanity and self-interest, and, with the sternness of an impartial judge, to condemn to silence and oblivion even the offspring of his own mind, for which he doubtless felt a parent's fondness, when it fell short of that standard of perfection which he had reared.—(Cheers.) From this incident in the life of that great man, we may draw, I think, a most useful lesson, which we may apply with good effect to fields of inquiry far transcending those to which the anecdote has immediate reference. Take, for instance, the wide region occupied with moral and political, or, as they are styled, social questions; observe the wretched half truths, the perilous fallacies, which quacks, greedy of applause or gain, and speculating on the credulity of mankind, more especially in times of perturbation or distress, have the audacity to palm upon the world as sublime discoveries calculated to increase in some vast and untold amount, the sum of human happiness; and mark the misery and desolation which follows, when the hopes excited by these pretenders are dispelled. It is often said in apology for such persons, that they are, after all, sincere; that they are deceived rather than deceivers; that they do not ask others to adopt opinions which they have not heartily accepted themselves; but apply to this reasoning the principle that I have been endeavouring to illustrate from the life of Watt, and we shall find, I think, that the excuse is, in most cases but a sorry one, if, indeed, it be any excuse at all. God has planted within the mind of man, the lights of reason and of conscience, and without it, he has placed those of revelation and experience, and if man wilfully extinguishes those lights, in order that, under cover of the darkness which he has himself made, he may install in the sanctuary of his understanding and heart, where the image of truth alone should dwell, a vain idol, a creature of his

own fond imaginings, it will, I fear, but little avail him, more especially in that day when the secrets of all hearts shall be revealed, if he shall plead in extenuation of his guilt that he did not invite others to worship the idol until he had fallen prostrate himself before it.—(Great cheering.) These, gentlemen, are truths which I think it will be well for us to lay to heart. I address myself more particularly to you who are entering upon the useful and honorable career of the British merchant; for you are now standing on the lower steps of a ladder, which, when it is mounted with diligence and circumspection, leads always to respectability, not unfrequently to high honor and distinction.—(Cheers.) Bear in mind, then, that the quality which ought chiefly to distinguish those who aspire to exercise a controlling and directing influence in any department of human action, from those who have only a subordinate part to play, is the knowledge of principles and general laws. A few examples will make the truth of this proposition apparent to you. Take, for instance, the case of the builder. The mason and carpenter must know how to hew the stone and square the timber, and follow out faithfully the working plan placed in their hands. But the architect must know much more than this; he must be acquainted with the principles of proportion and form; he must know the laws which regulate the distribution of heat, light, and air, in order that he may give to each part of a complicated structure its due share of these advantages, and combine the multifarious details into a consistent whole. Take again the case of the seaman. It is enough for the steersman that he watch certain symptoms in the sky and on the waves; that he note the shifting of the wind and compass, and attend to certain precise rules which have been given him for his guidance. But the master of the ship, if he be fit for his situation—and I am sorry to say that many undertake the duties of that responsible office who are not fit for it—must be thoroughly acquainted, not only with the map of the earth and heavens, but he must know also all that science has revealed of some of the most subtle of the operations of nature; he must understand, as far as man can yet discover them, what are the laws which regulate the movements of the currents, the direction of the tempest, and the meanderings of the magnetic fluid. Or, to take a case with which you are more familiar,—that of the merchant. The merchant's clerk must understand book-keeping and double-entry, and know how to arrange every item of the account under its proper head, and how to balance the whole correctly. But the head of the establishment must be acquainted, in addition to this, with the laws which regulate the exchanges, with the principles that affect the production and distribution of national wealth, and therefore with those social and political causes

which are ever and anon at work to disturb calculations, which would have been accurate enough for quiet times, but which are insufficient for others.—(Loud cheers.) I think, therefore, that I have established the truth of the proposition, that men who aspire to exercise a directing and controlling influence in any pursuit or business, should be distinguished by a knowledge of principles and general laws. But it is in the acquisition of this knowledge, and more especially in its application to the occurrences of daily life, that the chief necessity arises for the exercise of those high moral qualities, with the importance of which I have endeavoured, in these brief remarks, to impress you.—(Cheers.) Allow me, therefore, in closing them, to offer you one word of advice and warning, and accept it as coming from a friend.—(Loud cheers.) Never forget that as you ascend, your responsibilities to yourselves and to society increase; that the higher you soar into that region of freedom of mind—the beauties and delights of which have been set forth with so much effect by the Rev. Gentleman behind me—the more necessary is it that your principles should be sound, your researches indefatigable, your judgment unclouded, and your affections pure. Nor need we be ashamed to borrow in this matter a lesson and example from the processes of vegetable life: for just in proportion as the tree rises from the earth, as it extends its branches and multiplies its leaves, as it enters into freer communion with the gales of heaven, and drinks in larger measure the dews of the morning and the rays of the noon-day sun; just in that proportion does it strike its roots deeper into the earth, and cling more tenaciously to the soil from which it derives the principles of life and vigour. For be assured that if it were otherwise, its elevation, how fair soever the show that accompanied it, would but prove the prelude to its fall.



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